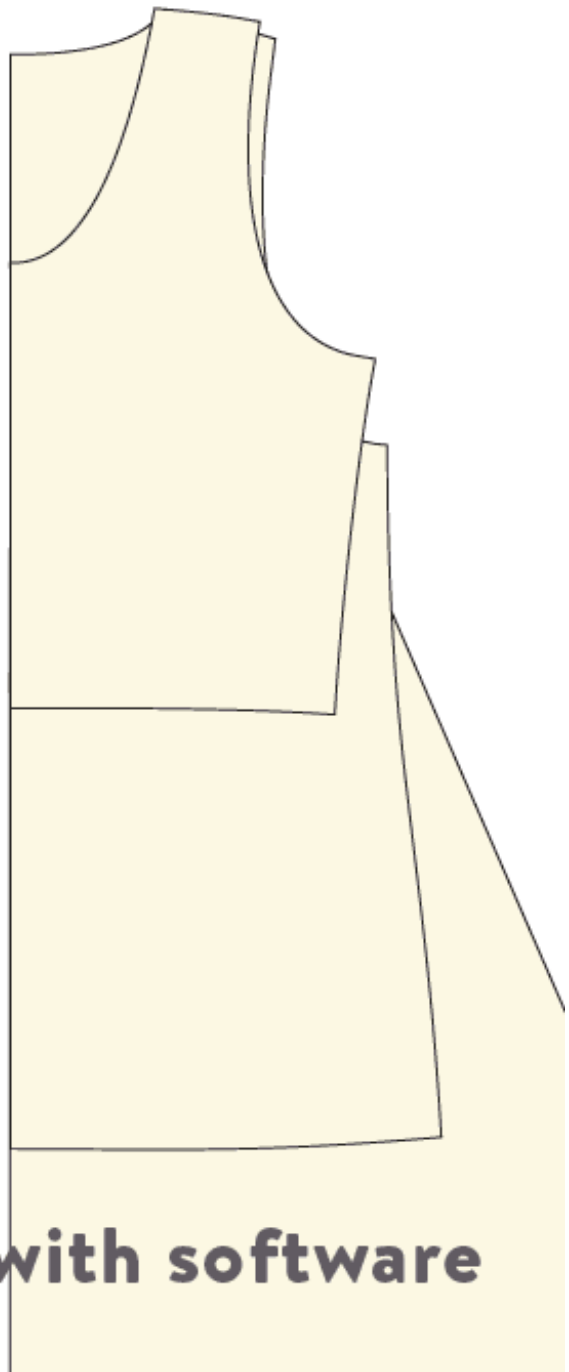
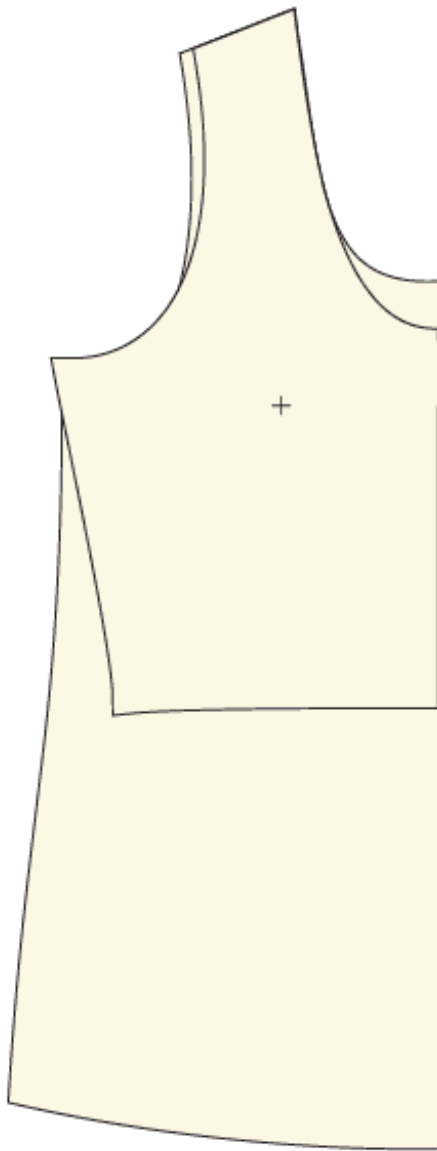


# Drafting Patterns with Software

 [clothhabit.com/pattern-drafting-software](http://clothhabit.com/pattern-drafting-software)

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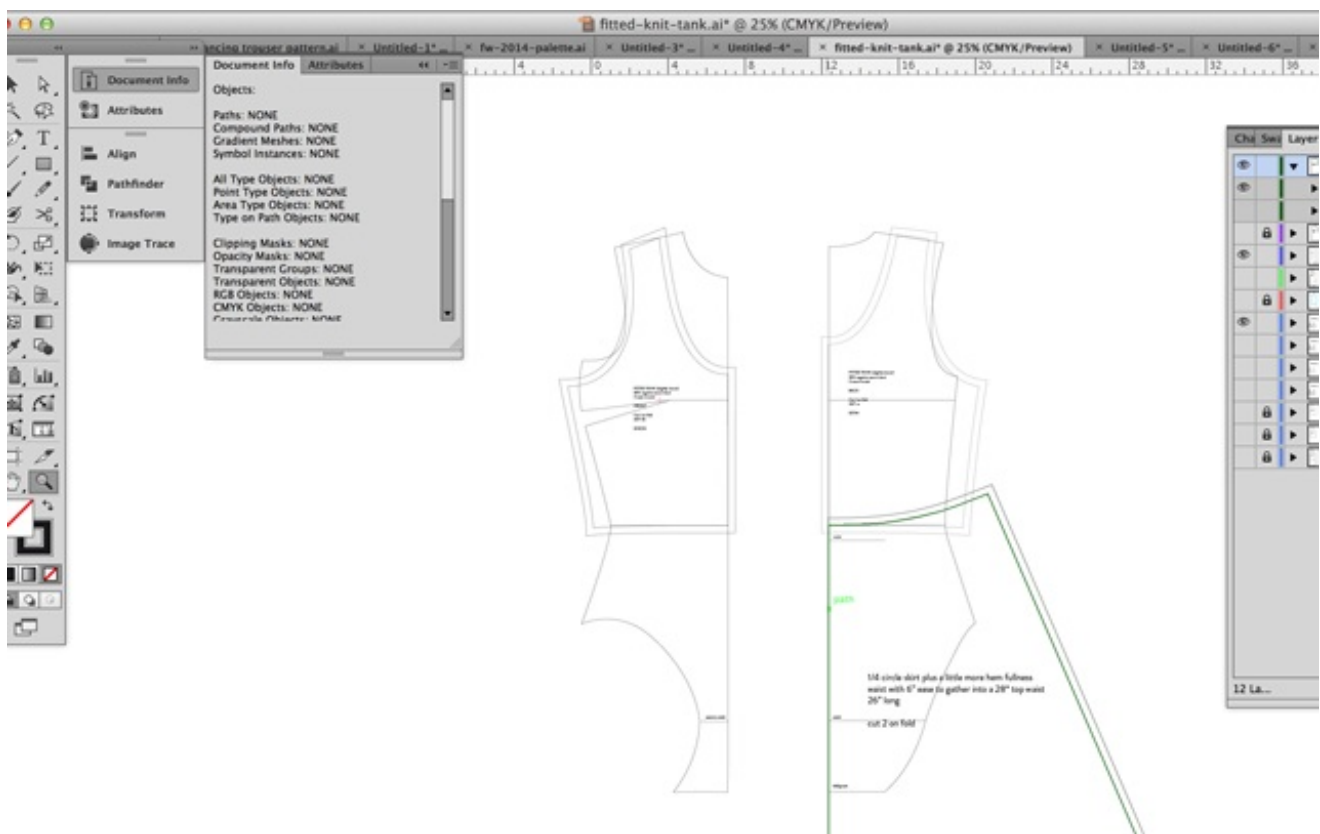


**drafting patterns with software**

If you've scooted around these parts for awhile you may have noticed that I like to make fancy-dancy illustrations for my tutorials. Most of the time, those illustrations are scaled down versions of actual patterns that I either drafted on my computer or scanned and then turned into a digital pattern.

Many readers have been interested in how I draft or what program I use to do those things, so I thought it'd be fun to open up the subject of pattern drafting software.

I use Adobe Illustrator, which is a vector program. I've been using Adobe software since the 90s and feel very comfortable with the tools in Illustrator so it was easy to teach myself how to draft in it.



However, my ease with Illustrator did not make me a good patternmaker. Even if a computer or some online program automatically drafted a pattern after inputting your measurements, there is still the work of learning to fit, learning what makes for a good pattern. Whether you like drafting old-school on a big piece of paper or in software, the end results can have the same greatness or the same mistakes depending on your skill or the method of drafting you use.

*A pro for paper drafting:* A drafter can view the pattern in “real life scale”.

*Pros for computer drafting:* The ability to copy, paste and repeat very quickly. (No more tracing pattern to make adjustments.) Lines and curves can be measured down to millimeters which makes tasks like walking a pattern and matches notches very quick and

accurate.

So let's talk about the types of software you can use for pattern drafting.

## CAD VS. VECTOR

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In the software industry, CAD is short for “computer aided design”. CAD is a type of modeling software that is used in many fields including architecture design, interior design, 3D modeling and pattern drafting.

Adobe Illustrator and other vector drawing programs are not technically “CAD”, although some like to call it that, short for “computer aided *drawing*”. If you have ever tried to import a CAD drawing into a vector program or vice versa, you know the chaos that ensues! They are two totally different languages with different purposes.

## Three Types of Software Tools

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Among options for pattern drafting software, I'd boil them down to three types:

### *1. CAD-based software for the fashion industry.*

There are many different companies making professional pattern software. The biggies are Gerber, Lectra and Optitex. These are all based on CAD technology, very specialized, and cost in the tens of thousands of dollars.

### *2. Scaled down CAD software for home sewists or custom clothing makers.*

Software of this nature is based on CAD technology but has less options in order to make it more affordable.

A few programs of this type:

[Wild Ginger PatternMaster](#)

[PatternMaker](#)

[FashionCAD](#)

[Telestia Creator](#)

Some of these programs work by measurement input. You put in measurements, it forms the pattern blocks for you. Others offer full-fledged tools to draft from the ground up. Some of them include additional “style libraries” to add on to your blocks. The market for these kind of programs varies from home sewists to custom apparel and smaller garment companies.

One very important caveat about all of the CAD-based programs: they are based on Windows and only run on a Mac when you own a copy of Windows and run it through Bootcamp or an emulator. (Both of which really slow down my computer...)

### *3. Vector drawing software.*

While vector software is not created specifically for drafting, it is a wonderful tool that puts a highly accurate ruler and pen in your hand. With this kind of software, you draw the patterns as you wish. There are a lot of little tools within a vector program that speed up the process over paper drafting.

The main options:

Adobe Illustrator

CorelDraw

Inkscape (free)

Another option: Adobe just released Illustrator Draw, a free iPad version of Illustrator. It used to be called “Adobe Ideas”, which I used quite a bit last year. It’s actually pretty sweet and has all the important tools you need for drawing. I drafted a pair of pants on it!

Despite its cost I keep using Adobe Illustrator since I am so familiar with how it works and have collected a lot of plugins over the years that increase its functionality. I’ll admit that I was never attracted to the CAD-based programs because I’m such a Mac girl.

In my next patternmaking post, I’ll explore some different ways you can use Illustrator (or any vector program) to draft patterns, along with some of my favorite tricks.

Have you tried using a patternmaking program? And if so, do you feel comfortable working in it? I’d love to hear what others use.

Would you like tips and inspiration in the craft of lingerie sewing? Sign up for my weekly eletter *The Lingerie Maker*.